

KATE SCHNAKE

AGE

39

FIRM

Hinshaw and Culbertson

LAW SCHOOL

University of Illinois Chicago School of Law

AREA(S) OF PRACTICE

Legal malpractice

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A steadfast commitment to excellence in the legal profession. That's what her peers say sets Katherine Schnake, a legal malpractice specialist, apart from other attorneys.

Retired judge Mary Colleen Roberts, a mediator and arbitrator with JAMS, met Schnake in 2019 when she presided as the trial judge in a legal malpractice case where Schnake served as defense counsel. The bench trial involved several witnesses and a substantial amount of documentary evidence.

Roberts said that Schnake's legal expertise, sharp mind and ability to adapt stood out during the trial.

"Ms. Schnake demonstrated remarkable skill in presenting evidence through witness testimony and in arguing complex legal issues to establish her case in this case-within-a-case litigation," Roberts said.

Roberts also witnessed Schnake's skills when the young lawyer represented an attorney defending against a legal malpractice complaint. Again, Schnake fiercely represented her client, demonstrated a deep understanding of the law and worked tirelessly to achieve the best result.

Schnake has crafted a reputation as a go to attorney in legal ethics, representing attorneys in disciplinary hearings before the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission.

Shelley Bethune, executive director and general counsel of

the Illinois Courts Commission, points to one case an example of Schnake's high-quality work. Schnake represented an attorney in a lengthy ARDC complaint alleging that the attorney misappropriated a large amount of funds. Shortly before the case was set to go trial, it became known that the attorney was and had been suffering from alcohol abuse and mental health issues.

"Kate did not abandon her client in the face of a difficult issue," Bethune said. "She supported her client, showed empathy and kindness and requested a continuance of the trial. I was and will always be steadfastly impressed by how Kate handled this entire case with grace and compassion."

Adam Vaught, partner with the Chicago office of Croke Fairchild Duarte & Beres, says that he often calls Schnake for advice on legal issues.

"Kate has an impressive strategic mind," Vaught said. "Every act she takes is measured against the goal of prevailing for her client. While she is still a young lawyer, her knowledge, skills and manner are far beyond her years."

In addition to her legal work, Schnake also has an impressive portfolio of publications, including authoring chapters in multiple editions of The Professional Negligence Law Review.

Outside of her practice she loves spending time with her two rescue hound dogs, Whitaker and Daisy.